



MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

An Initiative to Engage Mayors and City Council Members in
Promoting Excellence in Urban Education

City of Fort Lauderdale Project Proposal

April 20, 2001



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES
1301 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON DC 20004-1701



TECHNICAL-ASSISTANCE APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Place a check by the project to which you are applying: *Remember, a city may submit a proposal for only one project.*

(**X**) **Municipal Leadership in Education**

CITY CONTACT INFORMATION

City: **The City of Fort Lauderdale**

Mayor for City Commission: **Jim Naugle, Mayor**

Mailing Address: **100 N. Andrews Avenue 8th Floor**

City, State, Zip: **Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33301**

Phone: (954) 828-5003 Fax: (954) 828-5667

E-mail: JimN@ci.fort-lauderdale.fl.us

Or

C/O City Clerk: LucyM@ci.fort-lauderdale.fl.us

Education Advisory Board Liaison: **Leslie G. Carhart, Administrative Assistant II**
Mailing Address: **634 Northeast Third Avenue, 2nd Floor**

City, State, Zip: **Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33304**

Phone: (954) 762-8962 Fax: (954) 762-7400

E-mail: LeslieC@ci.fort-lauderdale.fl.us

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Proposal is Due: April 20, 2001

Mailing Address: c/o National League of Cities
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-1701

Be sure to complete both sides of this form.

Include original application - cover sheet, letters of support, list of team members, and the 5-page proposal, PLUS THREE (3) COPIES> No appendices beyond the required letters of support and team members list will be accepted. **Only one application per city will be accepted.**

CITY DEMOGRAPHICS: City Population: **154,680**

City Population by Race in Percentage Terms:

67% White 29% African-American 8% Hispanic 1% Asian 2% Other

Median Family Income: **\$ 40,630** (Median Household Income: \$36,837)

(Information Based on: US Census, 1999 American Community Profile for Fort Lauderdale)

CITY SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHICS: Student Population: **21,124**

(Based on 32 Public Schools Located Within or Adjacent to/Serving Fort Lauderdale – BCPS 98-99 SY)

Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Indian	Multi-Racial	L.E.P.	E.S.E.	Free & Reduced Lunches	TOTAL
10,436	9,992	4,320	13,712	1,977	235	40	144	2,103	2,927	13,483	21,124
49.4%	47.3%	20.5%	64.9%	9.4%	1.1%	0.2%	0.7%	10.0%	13.9%	63.8%	100.0%

Number of School Districts: One (1)

Name of School District: **Broward County Public Schools**

School Superintendent: **Dr. Frank Till**

Address: **600 Southeast Third Avenue**

City, State, Zip: **Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33301-3125**

Phone: (954) 765-6271 Fax: (954) 760-7483

E-mail: Supt_Till@BCPSGW.Broward.K12.fl.us

SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT POPULATION: **249,923**

Student Population by Race in Percentage Terms:

40.6% White 35.9% African-American 19.1% Hispanic 2.7% Asian 1.7% Other

Percent of Students on Free or Reduced-Lunch: **33.9%**

Introduction

Fort Lauderdale markets itself as a "Great Place to Live, Work and Play!" This RFP outlines a strategy to assure that the reasonable expectations for quality of life, equity, happiness, health and opportunity implied by that declaration extend to our youth now and in the future. In fact, Fort Lauderdale is a great place to live, work and play. But to remain so, our children must be provided with great educational opportunities, choices, facilities, programs, environments, support systems, role models, and materials. This kind of education is not the sole responsibility of, nor can it be achieved by the public school system alone. It is a community-wide charge. Blending our marketing slogan with a popular African proverb we hope to become "a village of great citizens, raising great children." The National League of Cities Municipal Leadership in Education Program provides Fort Lauderdale with the impetus and support needed to become a modern expression of just that kind of village.

Why is the city seeking technical assistance, how do they expect to benefit from participation?

Recognizing the importance and far-reaching implications of maintaining quality public education, the City of Fort Lauderdale wants to assure the leadership essential for identifying and implementing innovative strategies to improve the public schools and support our students. The City is seeking technical assistance to carryout a broadly representative, community-based planning and mobilization process to facilitate residents being better informed about and more actively and effectively involved in the schools and youth-oriented agencies and programs. This process would include components or phases designed to accomplish the following:

- To increase citizen awareness and understanding about the various factors related to the education and well being of youth; how our public school system is organized and operates; and, the role that citizens and organizations can play in assuring the provision of quality public education facilities and services. (Ref. Neighborhood Leadership College)
- To facilitate informed, productive discussions in a structured setting to improve public education generally and specifically to articulate a vision and action plan to improve public schools, student achievement, conditions and opportunities for children and families within our city. (Ref. Study Circles Resource Center, Assets-Based Community Development Strategies)
- To implement an action plan on a citywide, collaborative basis (specific events, programs, policies, initiatives, campaigns, etc) designed to address local issues, promote innovation and accomplish discernable improvements in school operations, conditions and performance. (Ref. The Search Institute, Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth)

It is anticipated that this project and the technical assistance it affords will allow the City *to bring more continuity and clarity to the policies and activities* related to education and the public schools. To date these efforts, while cooperative and worthwhile, have tended to be limited in scope or impact, more reactive or sporadic and have otherwise fallen short of our expectations, purposes and potential. Fort Lauderdale's citizens are diverse, resilient and resourceful. The City's challenge is to involve more of its citizens in the process of improving our schools and supporting our students.

Education, the public school system, the well-being of children and families are not concerns distinct from, or unrelated to, all the other functions and responsibilities of local government. They are elements and indicators of quality of life, standards of living, economic viability and community-wide sustainability. An important outcome of this project will be *to better integrate the City's efforts related to the schools into the context of broader community-building and capacity-building objectives*.

What specific issues and challenges will be addressed during the course of the project?

Fort Lauderdale is relatively young, increasingly more diverse and subject to all the impacts that come with growth, urbanization and intense redevelopment. It is both a unique and a typical mid-sized city. It is the county seat of Broward County as well as its inner city and it is a world-class international tourist destination. It is a city that, in the face of clear signs of decline and disinvestment, has been actively and, in large measure, very successfully engaged in reinventing itself for the last 15-20 years. This ongoing reinvention and redevelopment process has created challenges for and raised issues about the public school system. Fort Lauderdale's 32 public schools and nearly 24,000 school-aged residents are but a part (10-15%) of the Broward County Public Schools system (213 schools and centers, 250,000 students, 30 municipalities), the 5th largest school district in the nation. The City is a "donor City" that contributes a disproportionate share toward funding the public schools system, and it is also a "city of activists" that are becoming more adept at expressing their needs and representing their interests.

Some of the greatest educational challenges facing the City are as follows:

- The public school system is a countywide system and the city has no jurisdictional or formal regulatory authority to influence school planning, policy development or decision-making.
- The public school system, under prior desegregation orders, effected "star bursting"/busing practices that scattered Fort Lauderdale's children across the county.
- In the face of declining student enrollments a number of the city's schools were transformed into "magnet" or other special programs, resulting in an influx of non-city students from around the county into our schools.
- With the westward suburbanization of the county, (sprawl, inner-city flight, rising infrastructure costs, etc.), the city has readily accepted a substantial share of the responsibility for meeting minority community needs.
- As a consequence of rampant suburbanization, school dollars (capital, operational and programmatic), have been siphoned-off to newer western schools, while the older, eastern schools, specifically Fort Lauderdale's, fell into progressive disrepair and decline with no provisions made for the decades-long backlog of base capital needs compounding any hopes for the expansion or upgrades to physical plants, equipment or amenities.
- Now in the midst of an economic resurgence, with the associated pressures of intensive commercial and residential redevelopment plans and opportunities, the state of our schools stand in stark contrast to and impedes our community building efforts. The cumulative effect of the past-years neglect, in combination with having no clear strategy for either "catching up" or preparing for future school/educational needs, leaves the City in the lurch.

The bottom line is that the City must articulate and mobilize its resources around a powerful vision of how our community will embrace its emerging diversity, more than adequately provide for student needs, attract new families and businesses to the city, and assure an acceptable quality of life in our neighborhoods for all our residents. This effort will no doubt involve working to improve the entire public school system, advocating for improvements for our city's schools on a targeted basis, and also looking to bolster other non-school support systems and services. The effort will entail working within the existing school system, fostering city-based innovations and initiatives, and frankly, working outside or around the system as may be required. The proposed Municipal Leadership in Education Project is the proverbial "idea and opportunity whose time has come" for carrying out this much needed community visioning and mobilization effort.

How do these issues or challenges relate to the city's vision for school improvement or expanded learning opportunities?

Fort Lauderdale's vision for the future, a more perfect city, was made clear in its 1997 Mission Statement. However, the issues our community faces are complicated and the challenges formidable. Our success in bringing that vision to fruition still looms out ahead of our community as important, but as yet unfinished business.

In 1995 the City engaged in a community visioning initiative - An American Assembly - under contract with Florida Atlantic University's Institute for Government. During several months of Steering Committee planning preparations, and then as an outgrowth of a one and one-half day retreat involving about 100 citizens, specific goals and objectives were developed around eight different issue areas. One of these was the issue of Education. Quality educational facilities and services proved a recurring theme in discussions about everything from public safety and neighborhood quality of life to economic development and physical redevelopment. Three broad areas of policy recommendations emerged. They are highlighted as follows:

- *Collaborative Planning, Responsive Services:* City and residents should demand a higher standard from all public schools located in Fort Lauderdale. School policy should be developed from the bottom up. The City, School Board, public, private and civic organizations and parents should work together to improve education.
- *Adequacy and Excellence:* Steps should be taken to adequately serve the educational needs of Fort Lauderdale's residents. "Adequacy" and excellence must be achieved in terms on infrastructure, facilities, technology, innovative programs, provisions allowing multiple uses of schools (after hours), improved communication and greater involvement in school planning between the school district and City.
- *Holistic, Integrated Approach to Community Building:* The City should strive to have schools rated in the "top ten" nationwide in terms of quality. More community-based facilities and programs are needed. The equitable funding of school projects and programs is essential. Blighted neighborhoods must be revitalized. "Star bursting," the excessive bussing of students, must be eliminated. Integration must be effected; diversity must be acknowledged and accepted. A sense of "neighborhood" must be established between the residential areas/residents and the school populations.

The work of the Assembly was captured in a one page Mission Statement narrative that described what our community hoped the city would be like in the foreseeable future. That vision included the following lines about education.

"...The unique needs of Fort Lauderdale's neighborhoods are met by a highly competitive urban school system, with facilities and resources, which reflect the community's total **commitment to excellence in education**. Standards of excellence ensure students are prepared for life outside the classroom; parents and administrators are accountable for success. The City and the community, through commitments and bonds with educational institutions at all levels, have ensured that a quality education is available to everyone." ...

As an outgrowth of the American Assembly, the City went on to establish its Neighborhood Leadership College, an Education Advisory Board and undertook various small area planning and capital project initiatives. Despite the many positive byproducts or accomplishments, it still remains for the City to effectively address and target resources for the purpose of substantially improving the schools or the prospects for student success. In view of the issues and challenges the City is facing it is critical that our "vision" be updated and that a clearer path – objectives, tasks, initiatives – be outlined for how we can "get there from here."

To what extent has the city already launched new initiatives or made commitments and investments that provide a foundation upon which to build?

The Education Advisory Board (EAB), as noted earlier, was established in 1995. The board is comprised of twenty City Commission appointed board members. A staff liaison was designated for the purpose of providing support to the board and serving as a champion for their interests. The City Commission has been responsive to the concerns and interests of the EAB and their specific requests for action or support on targeted issues of relevance to our community. Funding has been allocated for several of the EABs targeted initiatives or projects.

For example, in 1998 the board conducted an Educational Summit at Fort Lauderdale City Hall. The Summit served to bring together citizens from the business, educational and service communities who had never had the opportunity to meet or discuss their shared concerns or interests before. Later, in cooperation with the Fort Lauderdale Economic Development (Advisory) Board, the EAB researched and oversaw the publication of a "Guide to Fort Lauderdale Schools". The Guide serves as a useful public information, promotional and economic development tool. Importantly, the Guide provided a vehicle for telling the more positive facts about our schools and student performance that too often do not find their way into the press or public opinion. Further follow-up publications are planned which will more specifically address the needs of families relocating to our city and to outline the many opportunities available for citizens and businesses to support our schools as "Partners" or volunteers.

The EAB has also proved an effective advocate for issues critical to the City's schools and families. Several members of the board were involved (as private citizens) in the successful litigation of a lawsuit to achieve educational equity for minority schools and students. As an outgrowth of the settlement of this suit, many of the schools in our community are assured of equity in programs, facilities, curriculum, educational materials, extracurricular activities, technology, and other areas affecting our schools. Members of the EAB are now carrying the story about this case to the community to assure parents and school leaders remain vigilant in assuring past inequities are addressed.

The City of Fort Lauderdale, through the efforts of the EAB and others, was at the forefront of the successful campaign to establish single-member districts for school board members. The result of districting is that many cities and neighborhoods have a greater opportunity to express and have their interests served. Similarly, the EAB successfully rallied City Commission support in assuring that the school system reorganized its administrative operating areas in a manner that was favorable to our schools and interests. The EAB regularly serves as a conduit for school educators and parents to voice their interests and to request the support of the city in effecting improvements within their schools or neighborhoods. The board monitors the capital/facility needs of the city schools to advocate for their interests as the school system develops and adopts its capital and operating budgets. The EAB has also been instrumental in implementing a variety of school-based programs like the "Gun Stoppers" program, "D.A.R.E.", targeted truancy initiatives, assisting in the coordination of the Annenberg Challenge Grants and interventions in improving cooperative-use arrangements between the schools and Parks and Recreation.

More recently the EAB, in cooperation with the school system and in conjunction with the Florida Neighborhood Conference 2000, which was co-hosted by Fort Lauderdale and Broward County, was instrumental in bringing representatives from the Search Institute here to conduct workshops related to their Development Assets research and intervention model. As an outgrowth of that training the EAB is moving ahead in an effort to implement the Assets

Inventory/Survey in Fort Lauderdale to identify not the “risk factors” affecting our youth, but rather the necessary positive elements, factors and influences – the “assets” – present in our children’s lives. These assets are the key to how our children “turn out right”, happy, healthy, responsible, successful adults. The EAB hopes to also explore the possibility of establishing a “Healthy Communities – Healthy Youth” initiative based on the work of the Institute and survey results.

In addition to the work of the Education Advisory Board the City has undertaken several other projects with positive implications for youth and the schools. The city is using its Neighborhood Leadership College as a vehicle for demystifying government and then providing citizens with the information and skill development opportunities they require to more substantially and satisfyingly be involved in their community. Work is underway now to develop a class series “Inside Your Local School System” which overviews the Broward County Public Schools as an organization and allows for discussion about the variety of facilities and programs they operate. A special emphasis will be placed on highlighting the many ways it is possible for citizens to help the schools as volunteers, donors, School Advisory Committee members, etc.

The City, in collaboration with the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, an umbrella organization for the city’s 65+ neighborhood groups, is working with the Study Circles Resource Center, SCRC, to carryout a yearlong organizational development and visioning process. It is intended that among the topics and issues to be addressed will be those of urban design, education, diversity, environmental justice, and others.

These latter initiatives – The Neighborhood Leadership College, Study Circles and Healthy Community-Healthy Youth – are the probable delivery mechanisms for how the city will carryout its Municipal Leadership in Education project. They provide logical mechanisms for achieving the specified objectives or components of the project:

- To increase *citizen awareness and*
- To *articulate a vision and action plan*
- To *implement an action plan on a citywide, collaborative*

This strategy, i.e. that of linking with in-progress efforts, also serves to achieve another underlying intent of the proposed projects which is to foster continuity, coherence and credibility as it relates to the City’s policies and programs addressing education.

Three members of the team will attend annual cross-site meetings (at the NLC’s expense) during the course of the project to promote exchanges of information and lessons learned?

Three primary/lead members from the project team, as described below, will always be able to represent the Fort Lauderdale project for the purpose of status reporting, offering best practices and pitfalls, detailing accomplishments and challenges, and otherwise “sharing their experiences”.

Listings/Attachments:

A letter of support from the Mayor, Fort Lauderdale City Commission

The attached letter of endorsement from Fort Lauderdale Vice Mayor and District I Commissioner Gloria F. Katz is offered on behalf of Mayor Jim Naugle and the entire Fort Lauderdale City Commission - District II Commissioner Tim Smith, District III Commissioner Carlton B. Moore, District IV Commissioner Cindi Hutchinson.

Letters of Support from Key Community Stakeholders.

Letters of support are provided in attachment from the following organizations and individuals:

- Broward Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Frank Till;
- Coordinating Council of Broward Executive Director, Robert "Skip" Johnston;
- Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations President, Michael Kasten;
- Fort Lauderdale Education Advisory Board Chair, John Wilkes

A list of proposed team members.

The project team will include both primary/lead and secondary/support members. The primary/lead team members will be representatives from the key stakeholders and collaborators spearheading this project - Fort Lauderdale, Broward County Public Schools, the Coordinating Council of Broward, the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations and Florida Atlantic University. This core group will serve in a "steering committee" capacity. Additional team members will be drawn from a wide array of agencies, organizations and sectors involved in education, children and family services, community development and advocacy. Targeted outreach efforts will be directed to smaller agencies, businesses, community-based organizations and minority communities and populations. The project should serve to identify and develop "new, emerging community leaders", bringing new faces, voices, and perspectives to the planning and decision-making table.

The City will administer the project. A Team Leader and appropriate support personnel will be assigned to the project. The City Manager's Office and the Community and Economic Development Department will provide oversight. Seed/gear-up funds have been included in both the current and upcoming years' budgets for project planning-initiation purposes.

Primary/Lead Team Members:

The City of Fort Lauderdale (5-10) - Commission/Elected Officials, Staff (City Managers Office, Community and Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Police), Education Advisory Board, Other City Advisory Boards (Economic Development, Community Service, Parks, Recreation & Beaches)

Broward County Public Schools (5-10) - Administrative Personnel, School-Based Staff (Principals and Teachers) Students

The Coordinating Council of Broward County (1-2) - Staff, Board or Committee Representatives

Florida Atlantic University (2-4) - Staff/Program Representatives (Administrative, Colleges of Education, Urban Planning and Public Administration), Students (Post Graduate and Graduate)

The Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations (3-5) - Board, Schools Committee

Additional Team Members/Prospects:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Business and Industry | • Civic/Service Organizations |
| • Foundations | • School-Based Organizations |
| • Youth Oriented Organizations | • Government Agencies |
| • Advocacy Organizations | • Social Service Agencies |
| • Faith Based Organizations | • Media and Press Organizations |

